

Letters, Notes, and Answers.

Queries, answers, and communications relating to subjects to which special departments of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL are devoted will be found under their respective headings.

QUERIES.

M.D. desires to hear of an institution into which a nurse, who has suffered for about twelve months from neurasthenia, could be admitted for treatment; she is under 40, and has had about seventeen years' nursing experience; her total income is about £25 a year.

ANSWERS.

DR. HERBERT M. BOSHOEWERS, M.D. (Santiago, Chili), writes in reply to "Ignoramus" (December 5th, 1914, p. 1004): Milk in the breasts without other signs of pregnancy in a woman who has had one or more children is not so uncommon as is supposed. I saw some cases myself, and published particulars about them in *Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor geneeskunde*, 1904. To get the breasts dry, apply a dressing giving support and pressure and prescribe antipyrine, 8 gr., thrice daily.

TREATMENT OF MINOR EPILEPSY.

F. writes in reply to "P." to suggest that if he be taking potassium bromide he should substitute sodium bromide, and also, as quickly as possible, cease eating meat or fish of any description.

LETTERS, NOTES, ETC.

MINIATURE FIRST AID POUCH.

"OCTOGENARIUS" has sent us for inspection a miniature first aid outfit, which his son, who has been in the trenches and is going to the front again, has carried in his pocket without any incumbrance when on active service. It consists of an ordinary gutta-percha tobacco pouch, into which is folded a tinfoil receptacle containing 2 oz. of boracic powder. The pouch likewise holds two bandages (one 3-inch and the other 1-inch) that have been soaked in a solution of potassium permanganate, so as to be sufficiently antiseptic for use; half a dozen safety and other pins, six $\frac{1}{2}$ -grain opium pills in a tinfoil tube, one to three to be taken to relieve pain if necessary; a dozen cigarettes and as many wax matches, with the rough side of a matchbox. The pouch is easily compressible into a flat pad to suit the pocket. To the above contents our correspondent has added a tube of cyanide paste, as recommended by Mr. Cheatle in the *JOURNAL* of December 12th, 1914, p. 1006. That writer had found powder impracticable, wind and rain preventing it from reaching the wounds, and its application to the under surface of parts being impossible without turning over the patient or limb. Our correspondent considers that while the first objection has some force, the second may be got over by thickly spreading the powder on the bandage one foot from the end, and, when applied, bringing the ends of the bandage to the top and crossing them, thus fixing the bandage by the first fold. A few inches of the end should be left free. The bandaging may be managed by bringing the last fold over the first, when the two ends can be tied together, making it secure from loosening and obviating the use of a pin. By aid of the contents of this pouch a soldier is enabled to render first aid to himself immediately on being wounded or to any near comrades.

FIRST-AID FRENCH.

INQUIRIES have been received from military medical officers who expect to serve in France with regard to books which would help them to converse with French, and, if necessary, with German patients. We have not been able to return entirely satisfactory answers, but we are informed that the best first-aid vocabulary (London: Polyglot Printing Company, 1913) is that prepared by Mr. Samuel Osborn, F.R.C.S., and Mr. Albert M. Oppenheimer, of the Order and Brigade of St. John. The origin of the vocabulary is that the editors presented such a book in English, German, and French to the members of the first International First-Aid Congress held in 1908; the appreciation with which the gift was received induced them to add Spanish, Italian, and Dutch equivalents, and the volume published in 1913 shows on an opening the six languages—English, German, French, Dutch, Italian, and Spanish; there are six vocabularies arranged in alphabetical order under the different languages.

The need for supplementing the average Briton's extremely fragmentary knowledge of French and German has led to the formation of language classes for recruits of the new army, and many pocket dictionaries and conversation manuals have been published from time to time for the use of the men already in the field. Amongst the latter it would be difficult to find anything better than Captain Keyworth's *Easy French* and *Easy German*. Small enough to be carried inside an ordinary pocket-book, these leaflets contain phrases and words most likely to be required by the soldier, and a similar manual of *Easy Hindustani* compiled by the same author in collaboration with Colonel Alexander Masters, is equally practical

both in the contents and arrangements. In each a phonetic rendering of every word is given, a plan which is followed by "Ajax" in his *Soldiers' Language Manual*, an excellent little handbook of English and German conversation. A more ambitious work on the same lines is the *Vade-Mecum for the Use of Officers and Interpreters in the Present Campaign*, by M. Eugène Plumon, who is at present acting as interpreter to the British Forces in France. A thorough study of this book should not only carry the British officer through the war, but help him to acquire a knowledge of conversational French that cannot fail to be of service to him for the rest of his life. Yet another method of learning the rudiments of French in the shortest possible time is Mr. Montague Fordham's *Simple French Song and Play Book for Soldiers and Civilians*. Mr. Fordham, who has held French classes of his own for soldiers, has found that learning by heart is of great assistance in enlarging the vocabulary and giving facility and confidence in speech. The following are particulars of these books:

Easy French for our Men Abroad, and How to Pronounce It. By Captain Keyworth. Published by Combridges, 56, Church Road, Hove. Price 3d.

Easy German for our Men Abroad, and How to Pronounce It. By Captain Keyworth. Published by Combridges, 56, Church Road, Hove. Price 3d.

Easy Hindustani for our Men Abroad, and How to Pronounce It. By Colonel Alexander Masters and Captain Keyworth. Published by Combridges, 56, Church Road, Hove. Price 3d.

The Soldiers' Language Manual (English-German). By Ajax. Published by E. Marlborough and Co., 51, Old Bailey, E.C. Price 3d.

Vade-Mecum for the Use of Officers and Interpreters in the Present Campaign. French and English Technical and Military Terms. By Eugène Plumon. Published by Hachette and Co., King William Street, W.C.

A Simple French Song and Play Book for Soldiers and Civilians, with Music. Illustrations by M. Louis Moorkens, and pronunciation of words in the songs set out in Marlborough's "Self-Taught" Phonetics. By Montague Fordham, M.A. Cantab., with an introduction by J. H. Badley, M.A., Head Master of Bedale School. Published by E. Marlborough and Co., 51, Old Bailey, E.C. Price 3d.

"NUTRITION AND MEAT EXTRACT."

MR. CHAS. E. SOHN (London, N.) writes: I ask for no space in which to reply to Professor Thompson's merciless attacks, but merely for the opportunity of pointing out that his last figures for weight increases are averages which mask the all-important fact that these increases were in general not maintained after the first few days in spite of repeated doses of extract, nor do they show the increases after non-meat-extract periods. Therefore to say that the extract has "a body building power ten to twenty times the amount taken" is incorrect, and such advertisements as embody those words (I enclose a specimen) can do no credit to their originator.

VITAMINE.

DR. JAMES OLIVER (London) writes: Vitamine is not an organic mineral compound, but an organic complexity of mineral substances. It exists in the polishings of rice. It is eliminated from white flour in the roller process of milling wheat. It exists in milk, but has its virtues impaired when milk is sterilized or even pasteurized. That it is of the utmost importance to the animal organism we have abundant proof. Its absence or deficiency in cases where polished rice is virtually the only food supplied produces gastro-intestinal disturbances, neuritis and beri-beri. Its elimination from white flour has been shown to be the cause of a form of beri-beri in the case of some of the poorer inhabitants of Labrador whose diet during the winter months consists chiefly of white bread and tea. Its altered chemical constitution in milk produced by superheating is a cause of rickets and impairment of the elasticity of the tissues generally. Vitamine, however, is as a matter of fact nothing more nor less than organic combinations of those mineral substances which hitherto have attracted but little attention, and which are so essential for the maintenance of all the vital processes in the animal body.

CHLORAL HYDRATE IN TETANUS.

DR. S. H. CHURUKIAN (Simbellawein, Egypt) writes to express the opinion that chloral hydrate has a specific action against the toxins of tetanus. He gives large doses so as to induce deep sleep. He has recently sent records of cases so treated to the Public Health Department of Egypt.

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